

SOME FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW...

Throughout the mid-to-late 1900's, legislative efforts increased women's rights...but the gains were often hard won! Why is there such strong opposition to giving women the same rights as men?

- Did you know...The 19th Amendment which grants women the right to vote was slimly ratified? It came down to one single vote in the state of Tennessee.
- Did you know...The Civil Rights Act of 1964 which bans discrimination because of a person's color, race, national origin, religion, or *sex* was passed after a 75-day *filibuster* in the Senate? The debate was one of the longest in Senate history.
- With the growing attention to the importance of worldwide equal rights for women, it is OUTRAGEOUS that unlike the constitutions of over 50 nations, the United States Constitution still does not guarantee its female citizens equal rights with men. The following are just a few countries which have explicit statements on women's equality or non-discrimination based on gender in their constitutions:

Austria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Canada	Ethiopia	Fiji
Finland	Hungary	Japan	Madagascar	Mexico
Portugal	South Africa	Switzerland	Thailand	Turkey

- Over thirty years have elapsed since the Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment. This historic Constitutional Amendment was intended to ensure equality for women and men in all areas of society. When Congress passed the ERA in 1972, it provided that the measure had to be ratified by the necessary number of states (38) within 7 years. (The deadline was later extended to 10 years). The ERA was only three states shy of full ratification at the 1982 deadline.

During the last 30 years, women have made extraordinary strides toward achieving equality-- but without the ERA, women have often been denied the ability to seek justice when they have experienced discrimination. The Supreme Court decision in the Virginia Military Institute case (Virginia v. United States) helped clarify that gender "classifications may not be used... to create or perpetuate the legal, social, and economic inferiority of women." That principle has been upheld; however, laws can still perpetuate gender classifications that keep women from achieving their full potential. Passage of the ERA is the Constitutional affirmation of this Supreme Court decision.